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MORAL DEFICIENCIES AS DETERMINING INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONS.*

SINCE Socrates defined virtue as a science, attempts to discover a constant and fundamental relation between intellect and morality have not ceased to be made. On the one hand, higher intelligence has been looked upon as cause of better morality; and on the other, moral perfection has been regarded as an instrument of intellectual progress. Inversely, intellectual limitation has often been considered a condition of a certain moral elevation—*e.g.*, the blessedness of the “poor in spirit,” the alleged evil effects of “enlightenment,” etc.,—and likewise it has been thought that superior understanding might be attained on the path of moral depravity. Finally, instead of connecting these two movements by immediate causality, they may be regarded as separate growths from a common root, and hence indirectly connected. The direct opposition between such assertions, all of which have an apparent validity, points to a fault in the manner of putting the question. This error probably lies in the fact that these discussions deal with conceptions of too vague and general a nature. The conception of knowledge, like that of morality, covers countless acts, which partake in some degree of the quality designated, just as is the case with the particulars included under the general ideas of happiness or egotism or liberty. It is to be hoped that such vague, general conceptions in scientific ethics will soon give way to the description of specific, psychological processes, included under the general heads,—a parallel to the achievement of Herbart in regard to “*Seelenvermögen*.” A certain preparation for this end may, however, be found in developing clearly the contradictions in the general relations between Intellect and Morality. In illus-

* This article is part of the second volume of the author's “*Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft*,” which is shortly to appear. The reader finds here hardly more than a general outline of the original article. From want of space, it has been considerably shortened without being able to consult the author.

tration of this point, the following considerations are offered as removing the apparent paradox that development of intellect can be brought about by moral insufficiency, or, *vice versa*, that deficiency of understanding and thought should go with morality.

It may be admitted at once that in many cases intellectual development is united with moral elevation. We need but name Socrates, Jesus, Spinoza. Despite this, it may be asserted that certain specific experiences are not compatible with absolute purity of morals. Morality, to be sure, is an effectual means towards the understanding of human nature, because, through the destruction of the personally egoistic barriers between men, it becomes easier for the psychic phenomena in the life of one individual to be experienced sympathetically by another. In order to understand a man fully it is necessary to put one's self in his place, or, at least, to bear a psychologic resemblance to him. In the case of sin or of weakness in the face of temptation, the pure and the noble obviously cannot compete in thoroughness of comprehension with those to whom the reproduction of sinful conditions is an easy matter. The moral man lacks the psychical experience which gives the immoral one so thorough a comprehension of the immorality of others. Just as the man of low and mean mind is unable to understand the high-minded and noble one and regards him as a problem, explicable only by attributing to him secret thoughts and purposes similar to his own, in like manner the pure man is too unlike the scoundrel to comprehend him completely. Criminals become valuable assistants of the police, not only because of their knowledge of the practices of rogues and of their hiding-places, but rather by their much better understanding of the processes and motives of the criminal mind. This knowledge permits them to draw definite inferences from given situations. For them it is an easy matter to forge a psychological chain with scattered links of evidence.

Vileness and temptation are powerless to touch certain natures. Even in schools, which are often hot-beds of the most unclean thoughts and words, and in which the immo-

rality of a few corrupted individuals becomes endemic, there are always some pure natures which are innocuous to the poison and in whose presence the obscene talk ceases. A sensitive power of reaction against evil which holds knowledge of immorality to be a taint, and which looks upon initiation into it as participation in guilt, is ethically admirable. It is certainly most desirable that as many as possible should live in a sphere of moral purity. The gain, however, is at the price of losing a knowledge of certain active powers in the life of mankind. It is a noteworthy fact that the conception of an act forms the first inclination to its execution, since a psychophysical association exists between the thought of an action and the steps towards its performance. When the tendency to action is completely removed by other causes, a clear theoretical recognition and conception of it is an impossibility. It is an acknowledged fact that the occupation of the mind with forbidden thoughts is frequently the incentive towards action, and success in leading the thoughts away from the forbidden fruit means prevention of the act. Inversely, personal consummation of the deed is the condition of pursuing it in thought to its logical consequences. Who can say whether those high natures that combine a deep comprehension of the being of man with elevated morality—who can say whether it was not in hours of temptation, of moral confusion, of alienation from God (for the noblest men least of all escape such troubles), that they attained their clear and penetrating insight into man's soul?

Genius, indeed, is able to concentrate in itself the experiences of the entire race in such a way that it can express the most profound truths concerning affairs of which it has no personal experience. The psychological conditions of the achievements of a man of genius are very often not of his own making, but of innate organization, just as is the case with so-called instinctive action or knowledge. A highly gifted judge of human nature may, accordingly, be able to comprehend fully the depths of the criminal soul, or the purity of a Jesus or a Francis of Assisi, without experiencing the emotions involved,—usually a necessary condition of such psychological

comprehension. In any case, however, the man of genius, and indeed every one who has any trace of insight, must possess an inherited constitution, which, by reacting in a determined way upon the present or imagined situation, may lead to the full comprehension of it. Unless we wish to assume a pre-established harmony or miracle, the organic condition produced by any passion remains the only source of its further suggestions. Moral imperfection is therefore a condition of the comprehension of immoral passions. In order to bring out the consequences of this necessity, let me direct attention to a single point. The countless works on moral philosophy do not contain a description of the moral life as it really is, but rather a compendium of an ideally perfect morality. The moralists describe life as it ought to be, and, though they may be convinced that the conditions are different in real life, still they look upon the ideal rather than on the deviations from it as the subject of their study. Ethics with such a goal in view seems a most useless science, and fully deserves the cold glances bestowed on it, not by practical men alone, but by representatives of other sciences as well. The chief cause for this error is to be sought in a practical, ethical idealism and enthusiasm, which substitutes exhortation for philosophy and converts the moral philosopher into a teacher of morality. Theory should hold itself aloof from any approval or disapproval of its objects. In making human acts the subject of scientific study, the student must not allow his high regard for morality, any more than his abhorrence of vice, to exercise any influence upon the form or matter of his investigation. In a modern work on ethics, the statement may be found that the student of ethics writes in a different frame of mind from that of the anthropologist or the botanist. This seems radically wrong,—*i.e.*, not that it is not the case, for it is so most frequently, but that, as far as the welfare of science is concerned, it ought not to be the case. It is just as if the anatomist, in his work of dissection, were asked to take into consideration the beauty or ugliness of the body on the dissecting-table. Whatever the source of the desire for knowledge may be, it seems proper to consider it historically

as an aid in the struggle for existence which has come to be valued for its own sake. The truest and purest research is that which is an aim in itself, and in which all moral ends which it might serve retire into the background. It will therefore be of great benefit to ethics as a science, if the student does not allow his personal enthusiasm for morality to exert any influence upon his investigations. A description of morality degenerates into an empty scheme if immorality is not placed in juxtaposition, in reference to which the true meaning and purpose of ethical rules can alone be grasped. To describe either by itself is as unmethodical as to write the history of spiritualism without constant reference to materialism.

The ethical students who treat morality from an abstract and one-sided point of view are like artists who work without models. True, the artist must not represent the reality with the varied and accidental mixture of all its component parts, but a side of it drawn from a certain point of view. For all that, the *certa idea* which Raphael thought necessary for the representation of beautiful forms is merely a guide, teaching how to combine certain features of reality, although a complete knowledge of the subject is the condition under which one side of the same can be correctly represented. Temptation and sin, selfishness and the depths of sensuality, humiliation, remorse, and purification,—all these experiences, without which the moral life of mankind would be a colorless, incomprehensible mechanism, would fail to be understood if personal experience were not at hand to fill out in part, at least, the empty phrases. The task of understanding these powerful elementary passions of the human soul is very difficult from the height of official station, as well as in the normal and correct life led by many scholars. The danger is always at hand, either of giving us at best an anatomy of the moral life, while the question under discussion is really one of its physiology, or of falling into a one-sided optimism. Undeniably, this is a point in which a theoretical knowledge gains depth and thoroughness from experience of comparative immorality, either present or past.

The possible intellectual results of immorality discussed up to this point are two. First, our immorality enables us to recognize the presence of immorality in others, and thus furthers knowledge. Second, immorality, in dealing with certain definite fields of knowledge, develops intellect as a function, and strengthens its power independently of the object on which its force is exercised. From this latter point of view, there is no immoral instinct which cannot, under certain circumstances, produce a sharpening of the intellect. Since a knowledge of affairs is a means to increase of power and to better attainment of all one's ends, therefore it is furthered directly in proportion to the degree in which fitness of means to ends is secured.

In turning from the point of view of objective scientific research to practical life, a glance is sufficient to show that for reaping selfish benefits, for attaining personal ends, much more acuteness and intellectual activity of every kind is brought into play than is the case where the ends in view are altruistic. The existence of immorality being assumed, the impulse to individual advantage roused by it makes much greater demands on shrewdness, prudence, and ingenuity than would be made in similar circumstances by a pure moral disposition. The liar must have a good memory. Every form of immorality presupposes sharpness of observation, caution, and calculation of results unnecessary to a moral man. The maintenance of an unusual position always calls for increased intellectual effort, because other devices are required than those involved in a typical mode of life. The immoral man swims against the stream, and hence, *ceteris paribus*, needs more strength and more quickness than he who is borne along with the general current, therefore the most dangerous knave is the shrewd one. The "Hexenhammer" of 1487 asserts that devils are particularly remarkable for their sagacity. It is impossible for immorality to maintain itself long when combined with stupidity. Through a want of adaptation of means to ends, it soon comes into collision with social morality, and is then made harmless either by direct paralysis of its faculties or by punishment. The saying, "Honesty is the best policy," can be accepted

only in the sense that, as a rule, the intellectual and other means at the disposal of immorality do not suffice for avoiding a collision with the normal arrangement of the world; at the same time the proverb implies that dishonesty has need of certain expedients, in order to succeed, with which a straightforward career can successfully dispense, provided no hostile powers are brought to bear against it. As soon as the necessity of a power makes itself felt, the "eternal fitness of things" provides for the possibility of its development. Since it is impossible for immoral persons—in whom these qualities are lacking—to maintain their position, a selecting process among them is necessary, and shrewdness must be developed as the most fitting instrument of evil.

However, it is not this indirect connection which, by virtue of its utility, makes immorality a means of intellectual development. This takes place in a more direct way where immorality does not concern itself with *deeds*, for which thought and the stimulation of thought in others are relatively minor points, but with cases in which immorality stands in closer relation to these theoretical conditions,—*i. e.*, where a lie is involved. We are not concerned here with the lie in the light of its evolution, but with its reflex action upon the spirit of the liar. There is no doubt that a lie develops many powers which would have remained latent in case of adherence to truthfulness. The mind grows wary and cautious, comprehensive and at the same time concentrated, delicate and yet strong, to a degree which would never have been reached, if it had always progressed in a straight line and in the path of truth. Falsehood, so to speak, creates new worlds which, however, may have connection at many points with actual existence. The popular saw, "One lie breeds seven," expresses well the fact that a lie, in order to attain its end, must call out an invention which has a close relationship to poetry. Falsehood must be capable of altering and polishing the forms of logic and judgment, the universally recognized premises of thought, in such a way that they may suggest a conclusion which, nevertheless, they essentially exclude. The liar must at all times hold in his consciousness two trains of thought, two

entirely different orders of ideas,—the one which he knows to be true, and the false one formed on entirely different principles which, however, is to appear to the deceived to be the true one. This state of affairs presupposes a psychological intelligence which is one of the most important weapons in the arsenal of the liar. Besides this, it clearly produces and develops a power of invention, and on the theoretical side a consistency and objectivity, the intellectual effect of which is only weakened because the logical consequences of the lie, and the mask of uprightness with which it faces others, sometimes make a victim of the liar himself. For instance, when the same falsehood is reiterated again and again, the liar finally believes in it himself. Here, it is true, the lie loses its value as a means of sharpening the intellect and of increasing its objectivity, since now the double series of images, between which, otherwise, the liar has to maintain some sort of harmony, no longer exists. The necessity of maintaining such a harmony creates a mobility of mind, a great readiness in meeting an objection raised by one train of ideas by making a variation in the other series. This double objectivity which the two series require are confounded in the mind of the dupe.

But the possible improvement of the intellect through falsehood is often changed into its contrary. The very dualism of the logical series, which sharpens the intellect when the division between them is kept distinct, makes the same dull when this separation is no longer successfully maintained, the appreciation and the instinct of truth and the true conception of its standards being lost. This is especially true of great, all-permeating falsehoods, which form a part in the lives of so many people. They are not merely verbal fictions, but enacted lies. Our public and private life shows at every point remains of formerly efficient forms, which stand in direct contradiction to modern thought and, from this stand-point, must be regarded as falsehoods. Upon critical examination of the participation of the educated classes in the life of the church, or the relation of higher and lower officials in all circles and walks of life, falsehood in word and

deed is met at every step, produced by cowardice, convenience, habit, and even by the honest belief that a revolt against the evil would work more mischief than a *laissez-faire* policy. In such a case a clear, intellectual acuteness in the conception of scientific truths must suffer, although it *can* coexist with a full recognition of the falseness in a part of our existence. Indeed, the very consciousness of the falsity of such a position has often been the spur to a purer and clearer conception of reality. Immorality can only be looked upon as guilty when it is clearly recognized as such. The act which makes it so—setting the falsehood in its true light—is, at the same time, the source of a wide-spread and penetrating knowledge. Another fact which takes away from the intellectual value of the so-called social lies is their passive acceptance by the individual, who, for the most part, simply lives on in the manner traditionally enjoined upon him. The free, formative element is lacking, as well as the necessity of measuring one's own strength at every step with a world whose aim is an entirely opposite one, and of maintaining, by constant modifications, the logical consequences of word and deed,—in all of which particulars the specific falsehood proved its strengthening effects on the intellectual powers.

The strengthening of the mind, which we denoted to be directly connected with immorality, is not generally the result of a wrong motive; but the case is different when the motive-power is self-love. Wit and learning are grounds for vanity, a passion which prompts us to energetic mental activity. This example, though simple, needs especial consideration because of the attitude of disapproval assumed towards this subjective motive as annihilating the value of all knowledge thus gained. Of all motives of intellectual activity which are not absolutely pure, vanity seems, however, least of all to modify the results obtained. In contradistinction to political prejudice as influencing historical research,—bigotry creeping into a study of natural law, or the predetermination of the result to which investigation will lead,—in contradistinction to all this, the vain desire of appearing especially clever or learned seems comparatively harmless. For the very reason

that vanity bears so purely personal a character, it will not incline to a deviation of judgment such as might be the case where the wrong motive has a certain objective result and tendency in view. A peculiar resemblance is here particularly noticeable between the most objective and the most subjective pursuits. In both cases, although for different motives, that inequality in the treatment of subjects disappears, which is usually present as the outcome of a special leaning towards one side or the other. An entirely unprejudiced attitude, because an indifferent one, towards both sides may arise equally well from a principle of truth-seeking, which requires unquestioning acceptance of the facts taught by realities, as from a pure subjectivity which takes no interest in matters for their own sake.

In practice, the integrity of this position suffers from a sociopsychological bias, by which vanity is more gratified by the attainment of certain results than by the attainment of others. If one of two scientists discovers a cure for consumption and the other brings to light a remedy for emphysema, though the two might have exerted equal ingenuity and labor in their research, the former would be admired incomparably more than the latter, for the accidental reason that his work would enjoy a wider range of utility than that of his fellow-scientist. In like manner, the practical interest taken in the result of investigation is reflected in the importance of the process of thought by which the end is reached. If the appreciation of research were in exact and unchanging proportion to the amount of intellectual exertion involved, and depended on that alone, then vanity of recognition could not work mischief to the honesty of thought by a prejudice in favor of certain results. In point of fact, however, popular opinion sees evidence of deeper thought in certain results than in others, which leads to the temptation to obtain these conclusions at any cost. This is manifested most of all in criticism, in pessimism, in scepticism, briefly, in the negation of thought in contradistinction to its assertion. A simple, positive truth, no matter how much acuteness and penetration its discovery may involve, does not possess the same fascination of inge-

nuity for the generality of people which belongs to destructive criticism—to Mephistophelean negation of everything traditionally true and beautiful. In condemning an action or a usage, or, in fact, anything in actual existence, the critic in so doing raises himself above the object of his attack. He stands upon a higher plane and feels himself master of the general rules and restrictions to which the matter under discussion is subject. This position is the more easily obtained the more criticism is purely negative, for weak points will be found to exist in everything empirical, even though it be the most complete of its kind. A significant shrug, although no reason may be assigned for it, is sufficient with some to indicate the existence of extraordinary hidden cleverness on the part of the critic. This mode of criticism wins for him not only an unassailable reputation for powers of judgment, but also a mysterious authority over his listener. Furthermore, the more extended and the more inclusive the range of a judgment, the more enlightened does the critic appear to himself and to others; and the most comprehensive judgments are declared in negative, sceptical, and pessimistic assertions. A positive judgment, being definite, is also limited in itself. While it is difficult to mention the qualities which a certain thing possesses, it is an easy matter to point out its deficiencies, and easiest of all to look at the matter from a sceptical point of view. An unfavorable criticism will therefore be apt to be clothed in generalities and will seem to deal with the subject in its entirety. Finally, if pessimism, in its popular and accidental form even more than in its scientific and essential one, not only judges, but condemns the whole world, if it despises that which is revered by many, and regards as a matter of indifference what to others seems worthy of attainment even by struggle,—by that very act of criticism it will appear to rise above the level of the commonplace. The polite literature of the present day, as well as popular philosophy and our topics of conversation, alike indicate this rank growth of pessimistic views, only too frequently the product of vanity and morbid self-analysis, which, in turn, flourish best in the soil of pessimism.

Another application of this principle forms an integral part of our theme,—the sexual relation. When the importance of the sexual passions in all the relations of life is taken into consideration and the strength of the feelings concerned, the interest in the matter is an entirely natural one; nevertheless, every discussion of the topic outside a most limited circle is considered offensive. Hesitation is manifested in approaching the subject even in a most serious and scientific mood, because of the consciousness of arousing a foreign interest. In consequence, less scientific attention has been paid to the life of the sexes from a psychological and social stand-point than would be the case were it co-ordinated with all other sciences and without the fear of arousing forbidden desires. Botany and psycho-physics would now show a very high grade of development, had as universal an interest been manifested in them as in the question in hand. If, acting in the spirit of the Rigorists, we hold this interest to be an immoral one, still its existence might be made of some use to knowledge. The pleasurable charm peculiar to this field has led to experiences and thoughts scarcely to be matched by those on any other subject. The light which might thus be thrown on deep psychological, sociological, and psychiatric questions is withheld, because even among men of science there is to be found a hesitancy in using impulses usually considered immoral as a means of obtaining knowledge. In opposition to this sentiment, Thomas Aquinas significantly remarked, "Since God himself makes use of the sins of mankind in carrying out His ends, let us not hesitate to imitate him."

The foregoing discussion has shown immorality in the light of a *positive* cause of theoretical progress, and as containing in itself powers which, when given a certain impetus, led to intellectual advancement. Immorality may aid in bringing about this result in still another way,—that is, clearing away obstacles which morality usually places in the path of knowledge. Of these immoral conditions of knowledge, *indifference* towards the subject must be mentioned first. Here the total exclusion of personal or sympathetic considerations takes on the semblance of hard-heartedness. Vivisection, not

in its therapeutic, but in its purely scientific, character, furnishes a most noteworthy example. It frequently happens that a man has to steel himself against the moods and inclinations of his own heart in order to place himself completely at the service of knowledge. The ideal of Spinoza, which demands that man should feel neither sorrow nor joy over human affairs, but that he should *understand* them, rests upon the assumption that the former emotions stand in the way of a full comprehension of things. He who feels sympathy with others, or remorse over his own deficiencies, cannot, according to Spinoza and the Stoics, be considered as standing upon the height of intellectual development. In order to attain to this point of view, it is necessary to cast aside feelings universally held to be moral in tendency. It is not through positive immorality, but still by means of an indifference towards the demands of ethics that the way is cleared to a complete comprehension of phenomena. It often is necessary to strike a direct blow at the duty of piety if a clear, objective judgment of persons is to be obtained.

This situation brings to mind the cruel character of an æsthetic interest in things. In certain landscapes, poor, tumble-down, decaying huts possess poetical charm. In looking for beauty, but one face of phenomena is regarded, and no attention is paid to the existence of another side, which, if it came under our observation, would arouse ethical emotions destructive of the æsthetic qualities of the object. When the amount of misery in the world is taken into consideration, and the appeal for sympathy and aid, from which no one penetrating below the surface of things can escape, it becomes evident that a certain paralysis of the sensibilities towards the emotional side of events is necessary for complete absorption in æsthetic interests. This callousness, which from the ethical point of view is to be condemned, may, perhaps, serve as an explanation of the moral deficiencies so frequently manifested in artistic and æsthetically inclined natures. Chamisso, in his poem of "The Crucifix," has given most powerful expression to this neglect of the ethical in the presence of the æsthetic demand.

This connection between a theoretical interest and a lack of certain ethical emotions makes an extremely rationalistic and strictly logical habit of mind take pleasure in creating rigorous maxims of morality. The Stoic, it is true, knows not anger nor indignation; but sympathy and clemency are equally strange to him; and it is well known how much the rationalism of Kant has been reproached for a lack of human emotions. In the degree in which we are accustomed to look upon these natural feelings as necessary parts of the moral life, it is impossible to include them all in the circle of a logical theory because of the number and variety of their sources, and the completely independent position of each one in our consciousness. If a certain fundamental doctrine is used as a guide of conduct, and is followed to its rational consequences, a point is usually reached from which the way to a gratification of moral desires branches off from the logical continuation of the course previously adhered to. From Descartes's extremely spiritual conception of the soul, and the strictly mechanical character assigned by him to the corporeal world in antithesis to the former idea, he deduced the belief that animals are mere machines. He declared that their expressions of feeling—*e.g.*, the cry upon being struck—did not come in the range of conscious action, but followed as mechanically as the sound from an organ when a key is touched. Some Cartesians pushed this logical deduction so far that they practised cruelty to animals in order to prove to others their belief in the mechanical nature of beasts. There is no doubt that the moral sensibility of these men stood in inward opposition to their action; in order to be logical, it was necessary to overcome this feeling. In order to act strictly in accordance with the rules of knowledge, it becomes necessary to ignore certain ethical impulses. Even if there is a common root for ethical feelings and logical forms, it certainly lies far enough away from them in the present stage of their development to allow them to appear as absolutely independent formations. Their paths run side by side without coming in contact with each other; it is only occasionally that it is impossible to walk on both at a time, and that it becomes necessary to leave

the one entirely in order to keep within the limits of the other.

And now, as a final consideration of the relation under discussion, it must be observed that the attainment of certain knowledge is morally forbidden, and that penetration into the same is a sin. The traditional illustration of this point is to be found in the story of the fall of man: "And when the woman saw that the tree . . . was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat." To Adam and Eve the knowledge itself must have appeared as something sinful, without its being necessary to investigate further as to the reason for this prohibition.

The story of the Image of Sais shows this perhaps even more plainly. Truth here appears as something holy and—without further cause being assigned—not to be approached. The despair of the youth after the consummation of the deed does not appear in the light of a punishment inflicted on him by deity because of the violation of a command, but as the necessary result brought about by the mere psychological impression of an untimely view of truth. The conception of holiness, although produced by practical and teleological considerations, finally loses sight of these beginnings and fastens itself upon the object, which thereupon possesses sanctity as a concrete quality,—a part of the essence of its being. The pious Jew feels an aversion towards the "unclean" without recognizing each time the social fitness and the religious elements which connect this feeling with the object in question. In like manner, sanctity cleaves to ideas and thoughts and engenders a hesitation in laying hands on them, which does not seek any further cause, and whose violation is considered a sign of immorality.

In cultivated circles, this duty becomes a universal discretion, because of a knowledge of the feelings of others. The desire to keep secret certain matters of much personal concern was of course the origin of this discretion, and the consideration taken for this point of view by others was but one manifestation of the general, altruistic interest. The affairs of a third person took on sacredness as an essential quality,

and the duty of respect became such for every person of culture, not because its violation might have injurious results, but because it was immoral in itself. Hence, a general restraint, a suppression of the natural impulse of curiosity, even where no harm could accrue to the third person from yielding to it. Just as prying into the affairs of others, even without deriving the slightest advantage from it, is a source of pleasure for many people, so refraining therefrom, without any consideration of practical results, becomes a duty. The prohibition against laying hands on anything "that is his" extends in its widest application even to the intellectual seizure of anything not voluntarily revealed to us. The immoral character of indiscretion does not belong merely to the crude means of knowing the circumstances of others,—for instance, their outward action or bearing. A more delicate and more dangerous as well as a much more interesting ethical problem is a penetration into another's soul, to which one attains by reflection and by a combining of revelations spontaneously made by the person in question. Very often, men betray their most secret affairs—especially questions and events of their soul-life—through the very words which, though designed to hide their true character, yet furnish the psychologist with a key to a knowledge of things which they most desired to keep secret. The fact here to be noticed is that some knowledge can be gained only at the expense of morality. Moreover, this is true in the sense that it is not through some consequence or particular of that knowledge, that it acquires the character of immorality, but because the knowledge itself is prohibited.

The intervention of divine authority for the prohibition of knowledge, as took place in the legend of the Fall of Man, finds earthly means of execution. The orthodox, Catholic inhabitants of a certain district in America prevented a geologist from examining the mountains in that place on the plea that it was sufficient to know that God had made the mountains as they were, and that it was unnecessary to find out of what they consisted. Dante makes Odysseus tell of journeys made after his return to Ithaca, and intimates that the curiosity

which drove him to them was of a sinful nature. Any penetration into the plan of creation, any intellectual aspirations beyond the sphere that seems designated for man, is in itself immoral.

In this connection, *credo, quia absurdum* is worthy of mention; in certain respects, it may be considered the superlative of Jesus's declaration of the blessedness of the "poor in spirit." According to this point of view knowledge is a matter of indifference as far as its contents are concerned, and is, moreover, a hinderance to morality; consequently, the forms and conditions of knowledge in general should be renounced altogether. Illogical methods of thought, which are not at all adapted to the consideration of realities are, in spite of their deficiencies, to be adopted by the believer, who, by so doing, gives proof of his piety. A passage in Dante illustrates this method of reasoning more clearly: "If divine justice appears unjust in the eyes of mortals, it is a proof of their belief, and not wicked heresy." This statement must be explained as follows. In the degree in which God's methods are understood and agree with our logical and ethical conceptions, we have to a certain extent a *proof* of His existence and of the realization of our ideals in Him. *Belief* becomes a necessity only when our reason fails to aid us, so that in the *credo, quia absurdum*, the accent falls on *credo*. What I *know*, I do not have to *believe*. The more difficult the matter which the reason succeeds in digesting and the more in opposition to its dictates, so much greater is the merit in believing it, and so much stronger is man's faith proved to be. This unquestioning acceptance of a contradiction can only proceed from the deepest humility towards God, and a complete renunciation of the *ego* and everything contributing to its logical self-preservation.

Goethe's view of the world, also, has in it an element which forbids a certain mode of obtaining knowledge, but it is deduced from an entirely different point of view and gives it a different form. He considers calm adoration of the "unfathomable" a requisite of elevated morality. The disintegration and the dismemberment of nature, the continuation of

research up to the point where the beautiful harmony in the appearance of objects is destroyed, appears to him an offensive impiety, a misconception of the bounds which nature has set for man. He disliked people that wore spectacles because it seemed improper to see more than nature had intended ; he disliked to think about thought and despised transcendental analysis, considering it far better to confine ourselves to phenomena and to the unmistakable tasks set before us, and to limit knowledge to that which nature voluntarily offers us, without being violently forced to give up her secrets. At the root of these opinions lies the conviction that the position and importance of a reasoning being are subject to certain inevitable limitations which require no proof from a demonstration of principles or consequences. In itself the transgression of these limits is immoral and reprehensible. The eternal obscurity of the Noumena of Kant's conception is analogous to Goethe's "Mystery of Nature," into which it is improper to penetrate even if it were possible to do so. For the former, the prohibition of that which lies beyond tangible existence is a logical obstacle, for the latter an ethical one.

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DISCUSSIONS.

THE NATURE OF ETHICAL SCIENCE.

HAVING had occasion recently to write an introductory sketch of the science of Ethics, I have been led to give some attention to the consideration of the scope and method of that science ; and as the view which I have adopted seems to disagree with that of several other writers with whom in the main I am strongly in sympathy, I have thought that it might be desirable to insert a few words here on the reasons that have led me to differ from these authorities. The chief point of disagreement is with regard to the question whether Ethics is to be regarded as a positive or as a normative science—*i.e.*, whether it simply sets itself to study the facts and conditions of human conduct, or endeavors, in addition to this, to define an ideal, from which principles or laws of action may be